DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 329 EA 016 869

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TITLE The Cultural Context of Administrative Theory: In Consideration of a Multidimensional Paradigm.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 37p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Principles; Comparative Analysis; Cross Cultural Studies; *Cultural Context; *Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Management Systems; *Models; Organizational Effectiveness; *Organizational Theories; Policy Formation; Politics of Education
IDENTIFIERS *Latin America

ABSTRACT

The continuing perceived complexity of educational systems and the current status of organizational and administrative theory suggest a renewed theory-building effort in the field of educational administration. It is in this sense that this paper presents a heuristic paradigm for the study of educational administration in the Americas, a multidimensional paradigm of educational administration. The paradigm is founded upon knowledge developed over time in the field of educational administration and upon the evaluation of present demands and future needs of educational administration in the Americas. The paper is based upon the thesis that educational administration is a professional field of study and upon the need to conceive a theory of professional practice in educational administration. The cultural context of administrative acts and knowledge is the key criterion that governs the central concern of this paper. (Author)

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THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF ADMINISTRATIVE THEORY: IN CONSIDERATION OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PARADIGM

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CULTURAL CONTEXT OF ADMINISTRATIVE THEORY:

IN CONSIDERATION OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PARADIGM

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Abstract

The continuing perceived complexity of educational systems and the current status of organizational and administrative theory suggest a renewed theory-building effort in the field of educational administration. It is in this sense that this paper presents a heuristic paradigm for the study of educational administration in the Americas, a multidimensional paradigm of educational administration. The paradigm is founded upon knowledge developed over time in the field of educational administration and upon the evaluation of present demands and future needs of educational administration in the Americas. The paper is based upon the thesis that educational administration is a professional field of study and upon the need to conceive of a theory of professional practice in educational administration. The cultural context of administrative acts and knowledge is the key criterion that governs the central concern of this paper.

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF ADMINISTRATIVE THEORY:
IN CONSIDERATION OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PARADIGM

Introduction

An analysis of the evolution of 20th century administrative thought, coupled with a survey of recent research in the field of educational administration, shows a restlessness regarding the status of administrative theory. Thus, the trend to dwell with some concern upon theory building is understandable and justified. Further justification comes as a consequence of the growth and complexity of educational systems and as a result of the current social awareness of the nature of education in the Americas.

The primary objective of this paper is to discuss some of the efforts that have been made to construct scientific knowledge in the field of educational administration. The paper further seeks to define a heuristic paradigm for the study of educational administration in the Americas. The paradigm is founded upon knowledge developed historically and represents an attempt to arrive at a theoretical synthesis of the American experience in the international context. However, in light of this historical vision, this paradigm also seeks to respond to current demands and necessities of American education. Finally, this effort is based upon the thesis that educational administration is a professional field of study and on the awareness of the necessity of conceiving a new and integrating theory of professional practice of educational administration.[1]

Historical Perspective of Administrative Theory

The first concern of this paper is that of a rapid characterization of the evolution of 20th century administrative thought coupled with a definition of its presence in the Western Hemisphere. From a historical point of view, administrative theory of the current century was developed by three schools of thought: classical, psychosocial and contemporary. The classical thesis was expounded at the beginning of this century at the time of the consolidation of the industrial revolution. Three major movements were responsible for classical theory: scientific management (Taylor), general management (Fayol) and bureaucratic management (Weber).[2]

The protagonists of the classical school conceived of the organization as a mechanical and rational system in which management was founded upon the criterion of economic efficiency. The psychosocial antithesis was developed in historical terms from the time of the Great Depression that affected the World towards the end of the 1920s. The movements responsible for this development were those of human relations (Mayo, Roethlisberger and Dickson) and of administrative behavior (Barnard and Simon).[3] The protagonists of the psychosocial school conceived of the organization as an organic and natural system in which management concerns itself with the functional integration of its component elements in the light of the criterion of institutional effectiveness, allied with that of economic efficiency. Following World War II, the contemporary synthesis attempted to supplant the previous schools of thought on the basis of the criterion of political responsiveness, attributing special attention to

the situational variables of the external environment that affect the organization. In the development of the contemporary school, there are different but parallel lines of thought, such as the organizational development of Bennis, developmental administration of Heady and his associates, administrative ecology of Riggs, the institutional development of Esman and Blaise, the contingency theory of Lawrence and Lorsch and the management science of Drucker and others.[4] Today, alongside the neoclassical approach of the managerial sciences, there are not yet consolidated critical theories based upon phenomenology, existentialism. dialectics and action approaches which utilize cultural context as the key element in the orientation of administrative acts and facts.[5] The recent critical developments and the new theoretical perspectives in the field of administration appeared in the midst of the international economic and political instability that marked the end of the 1970s and the early years of the current decade.

Administrative Thought in Latin American Education

In Latin America, public administration and educational administration have accompanied, with some lag, the evolution that has taken place in Europe and the United States.[6] After subscribing to the juridical approach, essentially normative in nature and closely tied to the tradition of Roman administrative law that characterized public and educational administration throughout all of colonial history, the countries of Latin America adopted the business approach beginning in the 1930s. This approach was based upon the principles of the classical school of administration defended by Taylor,

Fayol and Weber. During that period, following the theoretical steps of Europe and the United States, Latin-American scholars and practitioners took up the standard of economic efficiency with a good deal less concern with the cultural and political aspects of administration. Following World War II, a period of rising prestige of the behavioral sciences, Latin American public and educational administration began under the influence of the psychosocial school of North American administration, adopting the behavioral approach, giving primary attention to effectiveness in the achievement of institutional objectives. In recent decades, a contemporary synthesis has become evident in Latin America through the increasing utilization of the social sciences in public and educational administration. In this context, the technical and instrumental criteria of efficiency and effectiveness of traditional administration have given way to the political criterion of responsiveness. Finally, under the influence of anthropological and political factors, current theoretical developments give emphasis to relevance as the criterion upon which the concepts of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of public and educational administration in Latin America are analyzed.

Four Paradigms of Educational Administration

On the basis of this historical vision of administrative theory and its evolution in Latin America, it is possible to define four different paradigms of educational administration as follows: 1) administration for efficiency, 2) administration for effectiveness, 3) administration for responsiveness and 4) administration for relevance. These four

paradigms are defined on the basis of the four criteria that have historically been adopted to evaluate and guide the performance of administrative acts and facts: efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and relevance. To define the theoretical essence of each of the paradigms, one should first define the nature of the respective criteria of administrative performance. In itself, this subject is potentially confusing as one crosses cultural/language boundaries as specialized literature on the matter is marked by generalized terminological and semantical confusion. For example, it is common to confuse efficiency with effectiveness; effectiveness with responsiveness, and responsiveness with relevance. Dictionaries of renown affirm that effective is a synonym of efficient, at the same time they state that responsive is equivalent to effective. Specialized translators from the English to the Latin-origin languages, as Portuguese and Spanish, instead of translating effectiveness by "eficacia," they translate it by "efetividade" in Portuguese or "efectividad" in Spanish.[7] Even the protagonists of the theories of administration are not in full agreement on this matter. There are divergencies with respect to the meanings of efficiency and effectiveness between such classical authors as Taylor, Emerson and Callahan[8] and behaviorists like Barnard, Simon and Getzels.[9] In their turn, the contemporary authors do not provide clear indications as to the differentiation of the concepts of responsiveness and relevance in theories of administration.

Conceptual uncertainties demand an effort to attain more specific definitions of administrative criteria adopted in educational administration so as to make possible their utilization in more empirical and

analytical settings. Definitions are particularly necessary which characterize the nature of the activities of educational administrators in daily practice.

Administration for Efficiency

Efficiency (from the Latin "efficientia," action, strength, virtue of producing) is the administrative criterion that reveals the real capacity to produce the maximum with the minimum of resources, energy and time. In the history of administrative thought, the concept of efficiency is associated with that of economic rationality and is concerned with seeking the means and procedures that are most suitable to attaining specific results and goals, independently of their human and political content or of their ethical nature.

The supreme value of efficiency is productivity: "efficiency implies proven capability based on productiveness in operation and especially stresses ability to perform well and economically."[10] Inherent to this performance is technical expertness, measured in terms of the mastery of know-how and maximization of the use of time, energy, material and other resources. In this sense, the efficient worker is the one who produces the maximum with minimum waste, cost and effort or, in other words, the one that achieves a high input/output ratio in activities.

The concept of efficiency arises in the economic and rationalist context of the industrial revolution and becomes the central criterion of classical administration as elaborated by Fayol, Weber, Taylor and their associates. The efficiency of Fayol is reflected in the functionalism of

his universalist model. Weber conceived of the rationalist bureaucracy as the ideal of technical efficiency. Taylor's notions on efficiency had particularly strong impact and were later reinterpreted and improved by Emerson, whose work The Twelve Principles of Efficiency is a classic in the history of administrative thought.[11] Strongly influenced by the Protestant Ethic, Emerson's approach was clearly economic in nature, for it stated that productivity and prosperity are not consequences of abundance, but rather the result of "... ambition, the desire for success and wealth."[12]

Classical administration developed the frame of reference for the development of industrial psychology which tends towards the study of the "psychological man," alongside the "economic man" of Taylor. Allied to the "mechanical efficiency" of the engineers, industrial psychology, founded at the start of the 20th century by Munsterberg of Harvard, would give attention to the study of "human efficiency" with the same objective of increasing productivity.[13] During the early decades of the 20th century, the influence of psychology was to become even more accentuated in organizational theory to the point that it finally assumed a primary role in the human relations movement of the psychosocial era.

The characteristics inherent in the concept of efficiency in administrative thought, such as productivity, economic rationality and concern with operational instruments and procedures, are quite useful in that they supply elements used in defining efficiency as a criterion of economic performance of educational administration. Therefore, the efficiency of educational administration can be defined as a criterion of extrinsic instrumental performance, of an economic nature, measured in terms of

administrative capacity to attain a high degree of productivity.

Administration for Effectiveness

Effectiveness means capacity or potential to attain proposed results. In the history of administrative thought, the concept of effectiveness was developed out of the behaviorism of the psychosocial school consolidated with the outbreak of the Great Depression towards the end of the 1920s. After World War II, effectiveness also became a fundamental criterion of the neoclassicists who conceived of administration by objective, under the leadership of Drucker, Odiorne and Humble.[14] The central concern of those who defend effectiveness as a criterion of administration is the attainment of proposed objectives. In the specific case of the educational system, the effectiveness of administration is essentially concerned with the attainment of educational objectives and is, thus, closely related to the pedagogical aspects of the educational system in the strict sense.

On expounding upon his concept of organization as a "cooperative system," it was Barnard who distinguished between effectiveness and efficiency. In his line of thought, effectiveness refers to the level of administrative performance in the attainment of institutional objectives, while efficiency is defined in terms of the degree of satisfaction of personal motivations.[15] In this sense, the cooperative efforts are always effective when the objective is attained. To Barnard effectiveness is the major criterion in such a way that the efficiency of individuals was only nourished on the basis of effective attainment of the organizational objectives. Therefore, to those who follow the psychosocial school of

administration, the concept of effectiveness takes precedence over efficiency.

Some authors distinguish between internal effectiveness and external effectiveness on the basis of the intrinsic or extrinsic nature of the desired objectives. In this paper, the concept of effectiveness of educational administration is restricted to the intrinsic aspects of the educational system and, thus, is concerned with the attainment of the educational objectives in the strict sense. The concern with the strategic actions taken to attain the extrinsic objectives of a political nature of the educational system obeys the criterion of responsiveness, as will be developed later.

The effectiveness of educational administration is, therefore, conceived of as a criterion of intrinsic and instrumental performance of a pedagogical nature measured in terms of administrative capacity to attain the proposed educational objectives. Based upon the supposition that within an educational system the attainment of educational objectives takes precedence over utilitarian aspects of an economic nature, there exists a priority ordering of effectiveness over efficiency. In other words, effectiveness is an intrinsic criterion of an educational system while efficiency is an extrinsic criterion.

Administration for Responsiveness

The concept of responsiveness appeared in contemporary administration as an effort to go beyond the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness. The Portuguese and Spanish terms of responsiveness, respectively

"efetividade" and "efectividad" (from the Latin verb "efficere," to fulfill, to carry out, to solidify) signify something real, something true that causes a concrete effect. Frequently, the concept of "efetividade" or "efectividad" has been confused with that of "eficacia" the Portuguese and Spanish term for "effectiveness," which is a synonym of "efficacy" and "efficacious."[16] The English term "responsiveness," as it arose in the theory of contemporary administative theory, reflects the capacity of meeting the politically expressed demands of the external community. In other words, "responsiveness" is the criterion of performance that measures the capacity to produce the solution or response desired by the participants of the community. In certain aspects, the concept of responsiveness is associated to that of social responsibility or "accountability," according to which the administration is obligated to answer for its own acts on the basis of the concerns and priorities of the community.[17]

Responsiveness is the central criterion of developmental administration, a theoretical construct associated with comparative public administration that arose following World War II in the broader context of political theory. Its fundamental concern is that of furthering socio-economic development and improved standards of living. It is in this sense that responsiveness attempts to go beyond the limitations of the technical criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. "It refers to more ample objectives of equitableness and socio-economic development."[18]

Applying the concepts of effectiveness and responsiveness to educational administration, one is able to draw associations between effectiveness and the attainment of educational objectives and responsiveness and

the attainment of social objectives. The traditional emphasis on the technical criteria of efficiency and effectiveness is associated to the intended scientific neutrality of educational administration, a neutrality that is incompatible with an administration founded upon the criterion of responsiveness. As a matter of fact, the concept of responsiveness presupposes a real and true commitment with the social objectives and political demands of the community, including its educational system. The materialization of this commitment through the adoption of responsiveness as the fundamental criterion of performance demands a concrete commitment on the part of the administration with the life of the community through a philosophy of solidarity and a participatory methodology.[19] The greater the degree of solidarist participation on the part of all the members of the community whether directly or indirectly involved in the administration the greater will be its responsiveness, and the greater its political capacity to respond concretely and immediately to needs and aspirations of a social nature. To describe the degree of political commitment of educational administration some authors adopt the concept of relevance instead of responsiveness.[20] However, for the purposes of this paper, responsiveness is conceived of within a political perspective and relevance within a cultural perspective, as will be developed later.

The interest and concern about responsiveness, as a criterion of the political performance of administration, reveal a capacity of responding and acting based upon the social and political demands of the community, including its educational system. In this sense, the degree of responsiveness of educational administration is measured in terms of its capacity to

act in a genuine manner in response to social necessities and political demands. The fundamental and substantive importance of these social necessities and political demands gives responsiveness a position of conceptual priority in relation to effectiveness and efficiency.

Administration for Relevance

The concept of relevance (from the Latin verb "revelare," to raise, emphasize, give value to) is the raison d'etre of administration which is the improved quality of human life. Relevant is that which is truly important, that which has value. However, one should then ask: value and importance to whom? To those individuals and groups who participate in the educational system and community as a whole, seeking to develop a qualitatively improving nature of human life.

The concept of quality of collective human life has a culturally specific meaning. In other words, the quality of human life is a cultural peculiarity of each human group and, as such, is defined on the basis of the perceptions and interpretations of the participants in that group. It is precisely culture, as the historical and ecological characterization of the group, that should provide the organizational frame of reference for collective participation in the definition of relevance and in the furthering of the quality of associated human life. Relevance suggests the idea of pertinence or the bond of a relationship with something or someone. In this specific case, "Relevance implies a traceable, significant, logical connection ..."[21] between two realities, on the one hand, administration, and on the other, the quality of the human life of the

participants, defined according to their own existential choices. In this sense, relevance is a criterion of performance measured in terms of significance, value, importance or the pertinence of administrative acts and facts for the life of the participants in a human group and its educational system. On adopting relevance as a fundamental criterion, educational administration appraises the meanings and consequences of activities for the improvement of the quality of human life in society. The perception and interpretation of these meanings and consequences is only possible through an administrative theory conceived on the basis of real experience. This theoretical conception is directly founded upon the participative posture of those responsible for the administration of the educational system. The more participatory, solidarist and democratic the administrative process, the greater will be its chances of being relevant to the individuals and groups, and greater will be its possibilities of explaining and furthering the quality of collective human life.[22]

The distinction between relevance and responsiveness is not always clear in specialized literature. Wittmann's concept of relevance, for example, overlaps the previously defined concept of responsiveness. Based on the supposition that "educational administration is essentially a political act,"[23] he adopts an approach that is more political than cultural and, as such, is concerned primarily with the meaning and impact of the activities of educational administration on society. The concept of relevance defended in this paper gives primacy to the cultural considerations of educational administration and concerns itself primarily with the conception of the human being as an individual and social entity and with

the concept of the quality of collective human life as the basis for political action in society. This principle has the purpose of forewarning the educational administrator against the dangers of extrinsic activism devoid of cultural contextual concerns and intrinsic considerations on the human being living in society. However, one should emphasize that the cultural dimension is also present in the work of Wittmann, when he refers to the commitment of educational administration with "Brazilian culture," with "intersubjectivity" and with the "construction of a more just, more solidarist and more human Brazilian society."[24] This paper associates the concept of responsiveness to the political dimension of educational administration and the concept of relevance to the cultural dimension, while Wittmann unifies the concepts of responsiveness and relevance into a single political dimension. This discussion demonstrates the close substantive complementarity of the criteria of relevance and responsiveness in the practice of educational administration since, in reality, anthropological man and political man are one and the same being. Anthropological man becomes political man when he becomes involved in a coherent manner in real society. In other words, human relevance takes on form in society through political responsiveness.

A Multidimensional Paradigm of Educational Administration

Though the four paradigms of administration correspond to historically distinct periods, they often converge in practice. This convergence of paradigms is confirmed in the Americas by the specialized literature on the subject. A case in point is that of Brazil, where the specialized

literature shows that there now exist educational systems and institutions of a strictly business nature in which administration is governed by economic efficiency as a predominant criterion, complemented by other criteria. It is in this sense that, upon referring to university administration, Brito proposes a business solution based upon organizational efficiency.[25] Other educational institutions and systems are concerned with their political role in the community and, for this reason, their administration is primarily based upon the criterion of responsiveness. Within this context, one takes note of the work of Arroyo and Wittmann, who conceive of educational administration as a fundamentally political act.[26] There also exist other educational institutions and systems in which administration is guided principally by effectiveness in the attainment of pedagogical objectives in the strict sense, alongside other educational institutions and systems concerned fundamentally with the human being as an individual and social entity. For this reason, these latter systems and institutions adopt relevance as the criterion of their administration. In the last decade, the work of Rezende and his associates has made a contribution to the study of the anthropological and pedagogical foundations of educational administration.[27]

The diversity of these analytical principles suggests a complex educational reality within a social environment that is in a state of permanent change and which, thus, demands a constant renewal of administrative solutions. However, the definition of appropriate systems of studying and implementing educational administration in the Americas within the context of the educational necessities and aspirations of

society is an intellectual task of immense proportions. In methodological terms, it is possible to visualize two different solutions. The first consists in conceiving of the four paradigms as four parallel paths to be utilized by educational scholars and practitioners. The option for one of the various paths is made on the basis of the nature of the institution and as a result of the perceptions and interpretations of the educational realities and administrative phenomena on the part of those responsible for the operation of the educational system. This solution is possible in a pluralistic society in which the theoretical pluralism encourages scientific progress through the development of competitive, convergent or contrary paradigms that tend to supercede one another.[28]

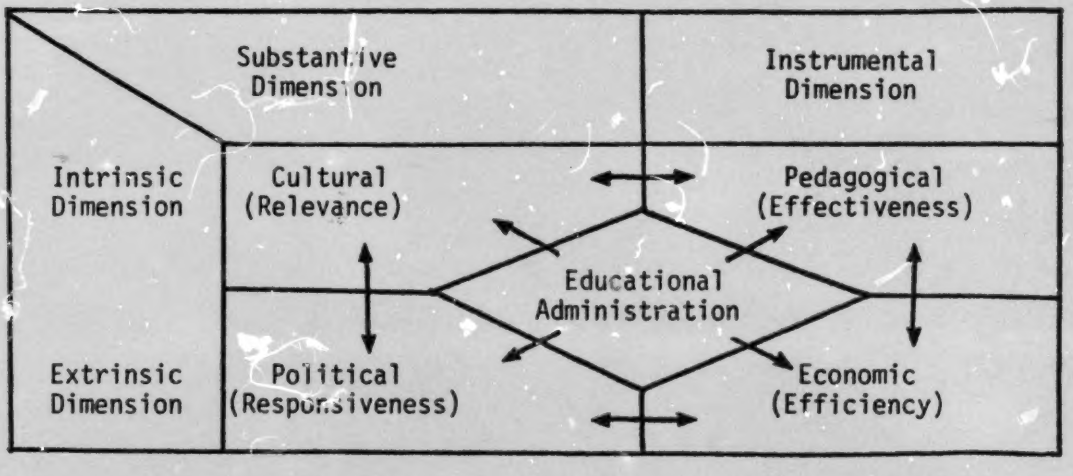
However, the four paradigms are heuristic elaborations and, as such, do not exist in pure form in real life. In this context, there arises a second solution which concerns itself with the conception of a new paradigm through a theoretical synthesis of practice in educational administration. In fact, this integrating synthesis would constitute a global paradigm, based upon the analysis of the similarities and contradictions among the four paradigms. In keeping with this solution, instead of defining administrative phenomena in terms of parallel paradigms, they are conceived of as interrelated realities with multicentric dimensions or planes.

It is in this sense that the four specific paradigms can be synthesized into a global paradigm defined as the multidimensional paradigm of educational administration and composed of four interacting dimensions: economic, pedagogical, political and cultural, each of which corresponds to a specific administrative criterion: efficiency, effectiveness,

responsiveness and relevance, respectively. The conception of the multidimensional paradigm of educational administration is based upon three basic assumptions. First, that educational phenomena and administrative facts are global realities composed of multicentric dimensions or planes with areas of emphasis that are sometimes complementary. Second, the assumption is that in the educational system there exist intrinsic dimensions of a cultural and pedagogical nature alongside extrinsic dimensions of a political and economic nature. And third, is that the human being, an individual and social entity involved politically in society, constitutes the raison d'etre of the educational system. It is this sociopolitical conception of the human being that defines the nature and utilization of the multidimensional paradigm of educational administration as heuristic. These concepts, shown in Figure 1, are reflected in a system in which two substantive dimensions and two instrumental dimensions are placed in contact with two intrinsic dimensions and two extrinsic dimensions.

Figure 1

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PARADIGM OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION



The conception of the multidimensional paradigm of educational administration is based upon a philosophical definition according to which the instrumental dimensions are regulated by the substantive dimensions. At the intrinsic level, the latter are directly related with the fundamental values and aspirations of the human being as an individual and social entity historically situated within a specific cultural environment and, at the extrinsic level, with the attainment of the political ends and objectives of society. This philosophical orientation does not combine with the systems of social and political organization devoid of regulations and which proclaim individualistic independence for the definition of the spaces of autonomous action without social commitment. In the perspective of this paradigm, freedom of choice on the part of the human being implies adhesion and social responsibility.[29] However, in the same way that a behaviorist system of educational administration is rejected, by the fact that it is characterized by utilitarianism and functional competition devoid of substantive interpersonal transactions, the multidimensional paradigm also rejects administrative solutions based upon totalitarian systems of social and political organization that inhibit freedom of action and the creation of diversified spaces that make fulfillment of the human being possible, as an individual and social entity. In the terms of the multidimensional paradigm, educational administration is guided by substantive and ethical contents of general validity, such as liberty and equality which, in turn, create the organizational framework for collective participation in the furthering of a qualitative form of associated human life.[30]

The Economic Dimension

The economic dimension of the educational system involves financial and material resources, structures, bureaucratic norms and mechanisms of coordination and communication. In this dimension, educational administration distributes and controls resources, organizes the institution in structural terms, determines roles and responsibilities, distributes the work, determines how the work is to be carried out and by what type of incumbents and establishes norms of action. The defining criterion of the economic dimension is efficiency in the utilization of the technological resources and instruments, under the rule of economic logic. The concepts of efficiency and economic rationality govern the different activities of educational administration, such as budgetary preparation and implementation, planning and allocation of physical facilities, the preparation of schedules, curriculum organization, selection of personnel and the supply of equipment and technological material. The administration will be efficient to the extent that it is capable of optimizing the inflow and utilization of the financial resources and the material and technological instruments of the educational system.

The study of the economic dimension is founded upon economy, business management, accounting, organization and methods, and technology. All of these disciplines are primarily concerned with the efficiency of the system and, consequently, suffer the influence of the rational and utilitarian logic of the world of business. For this reason, observations will be restricted to the economy that commands the other correlated disciplinary contributions.

Today, there exists a vast amount of literature on the economic context in which the educational sector operates and on its implications for the study and practice of educational administration. The economics of education has developed rapidly in recent decades and is concentrated on the analysis of the economic value of education[31] and on the study of the economic aspects of the educational systems, such as their external productivity and their internal effectiveness. Traditionally, the economics of education has considered the educational system under the field of economics, the functional logic of which has sometimes been transformed into the paradigm responsible for the modeling of the academic process and human life itself. Within this context, educational administration in recent decades incorporates many aspects of the socio-economic orientation of development administration that is common in the public sector in which the concept of planning has been particularly emphasized. Even though economists of many and varied currents of thought, ranging from the classical to the modern, have theorized on education as consumption, the emphasis attributed to the economic value of education and to the investment in human beings[32] reflects a philosophy that alters the intrinsic value of education and of human life itself in the midst of society. In the last decade, however, there has been a gradual process of moving away from the strictly economic aspects to the social and political aspects of educational planning.[33]

The Pedagogical Dimension

The pedagogical dimension of educational administration refers to

the principles, educational scenarios and techniques that are intrinsically committed to the effective attainment of the objectives of the educational system. In recent decades, the pedagogical dimension of educational administration has been subjected to a process of atrophy as a consequence of the generalized emphasis on considering the educational system in terms of economic and technological development. The predominance of the role of economy in education has conditioned administrative actions in the field of education and, as a result, education has been transformed into a business-like act, based upon economic logic. As a reaction to this situation, in some academic environments there has been increased concern with administration as a pedagogical act, to use the expression of Rezende and his associates.[34] The defenders of the pedagogical dimension have no intention of eliminating consideration of the economic dimension, nor do they intend to separate education from the technological development of the country. Much to the contrary, their concern is that of attributing to administration the responsibility for conceiving of spaces, methods and techniques that are capable of preserving educational purposes and the objectives of the educational system in their efforts to adequately fulfill their economic, cultural and political role in society. In fact, the pedagogical dimension of educational administration is related to all aspects of the educational system. It has the objective of providing appropriate conditions of permanent education to those persons who participate in the educational system. In the words of Valnir Chagas, it intends to avoid "... that the instrumental absorbs the essential and ... the act of administering tends to overshadow or eliminate the act of educating."[35]

It is closely related to the other dimensions of the paradigm. In this sense, administration will be increasingly effective to the extent that it is successful in attaining educational objectives.

The study of the pedagogical dimension of educational administration is based upon a wide array of disciplinary contributions ranging from philosophy to cybernetics. Philosophy and political science are the central disciplines, since the educational system, more than a pedagogical plan, should be founded upon a philosophy and a political strategy, and reflect the historical moment and the social reality. Only the alliance of political philosophy and pedagogy is able to coherently explain the educational theory and practice in use in the community. Aside from this, pedagogy is based upon biology, psychology and anthropology, among other fields. Finally, in the elaboration and utilization of educational technology, pedagogy resorts to information, retrieval cybernetics and other technological concerns.

The Political Dimension

The political dimension involves the strategies of concrete action of the participants of the educational system in society. The importance of the political dimension is rooted in the specific responsibilities of the educational system with respect to society. Its importance also resides in the fact that the educational system evolves in the context of the varied conditional circumstances of the environment. This importance is further accentuated to the extent that the evidence demonstrates that the aspects of educational administration, associated to the anthropological

dimension and the pedagogical dimension, are influenced by powerful external variables. This means that if educational administration is not capable of adequately balancing the powerful relationship of the cultural and pedagogical elements with the external environment, it runs the risk of closing the educational system in upon itself. The result of this attitude would be the loss of political power in the community. Within this dimension, educational administration seeks responsiveness, a criterion that is essentially political, according to which the educational system is called upon to meet the necessities and social demands of the community to which it pertains. In this sense, educational administration will be that much more effective the greater its strategic capacity to meet the social necessities and political demands of the community in which the educational system functions.

To study and understand the political dimension of educational administration, the fundamental principles must be sought in political science and political sociology as well as in the contributions of administrative law, public administration and political and cultural anthropology. The perception of a political scenario in education is of fundamental importance to educational administration. For a long time, it was affirmed that administration was ideologically neutral and, thus, isolated from politics, by the fact of its intended instrumental character. However, the classic postulate of the dichotomy between politics and administration has been shown to be inadequate in public administration, particularly in the developing nations. As a matter of fact, in this case administration is called upon to perform a political role. Consequently, it is in political

science that the administrator will seek supports for the regulating of the multiple elements that act upon the educational system.

Political sociology, which has as central theme the analysis of the social bases of power in all sectors of society, including political behavior, conflicts and revolutions, the process of political decision, ideologies and the bureaucracies; is a discipline of pertinence to the study and practice of educational administration. If educational administration is a political process, and if political sociology concentrates its attention upon the social conditions of the political process, the educational administrator will find a valuable basis for his/her professional activities in the field of political sociology.

Alongside political science and political sociology, public administration has a contribution of particular importance to make to educational administration, since it has evolved in the political and administrative context of the public sector. Education in the Americas, both governmental and private, is directly or indirectly related to the powers of the State and, as such, its administration will only be faithfully expressed if it does not ignore public administration.

The administrative law, which studies the juridical ordering of the organization and activity of the political society through the specific juridical realities that govern the rights and duties of the governmental and private institutions, is closely associated to the administration of the different sectors of public activity and, as such, provides valuable elements of support to those professionals who dedicate their efforts to the study and practice of administration in the educational sector. In

fact, educational legislation and its jurisprudence seek elements in the field of administrative law, both from the point of view of doctrine, that is, the systematization of laws and juridical principles, and that of the purely legal or, in other words, that which concerns the existence of laws regulating the educational activities of the State and of society as a whole. This is culturally specific to those nations of concern.

Many themes of educational administration go well beyond the borders of political science, political sociology, public administration and administrative law, and involve culture and society as a whole. In this sense, cultural analysis takes on much greater importance. In this light, educational administration turns its attention to cultural anthropology and political anthropology. These disciplines study the cultural signs and political aspects of society, respectively, without losing sight of the totality which characterizes the studies of general anthropology. This global vision of the human being living in society offers an adequate parameter for conceiving of a system of educational administration that is prepared to deal with the complex of social relations that flow within the context of a given society according to a code of cultural norms and values, i.e., its cultural context.

The Cultural Dimension

The cultural dimension covers the philosophical, anthropological, biological, psychological and sociological values and characteristics of the persons who participate in the educational system and in the human group in which the system functions. Though the cultural dimension

includes many aspects and levels, its basic characteristic is its global perspective that makes it possible for it to take in the physical, psychological, anthropological, social and philosophical aspects of human life. In this dimension, the role of educational administration is in coordinating the action of the persons and groups who participate directly or indirectly in the educational process in the community, with all of its characteristics and values, in such a way that it furthers a qualitative form of human life in society. For this reason, educational administration is closely related to the beliefs and values, the biological and psychological aspects, the philosophical principles and social characteristics of the persons and the groups involved in the educational system and the community in which the system functions. In the cultural dimension, relevance is the basic criterion that guides educational administration in its efforts to motivate adquately the activities of all of the participants of the educational system and its social environment, with the objective of furthering a qualitative form of human life in society. Therefore, administration will be relevant to the extent in which it offers the conditions that make it possible to further the quality of collective human life in society, in the educational system and in the community in which the system functions.

Aside from anthropology in the strict sense, philosophy and philosophical anthropology, psychology and physical anthropology, sociology and social anthropology offer theoretical bases for the study and understanding of the cultural dimension of educational administration. Philosophy is the general science of principles, causes and human values, while anthropology

is the comprehensive discipline that studies the nature of the human being including the biological and cultural characteristics.

In the vast field of psychology, it is social psychology that assumes special importance since it is the science that studies the individual and the social situation simultaneously on the basis of models which reflect the complexity of the social stimulus and of individual differences. Of particular importance to educational administration are the writings of social psychology on the capacity and creativity of the human being living in community and the scientific effort made to find answers to the difficult social and personal problems that exist in the educational system and in society as a whole. In reality, educational administration is a process directed by and to human beings acting and interacting within a more or less complex educational system. In this context, it is the task of administration to establish those conditions which make it possible for the human being to reach fulfillment as an individual and social being in its effort to develop an educational system.

As the discipline that studies the models of action and interaction of persons, groups and organizations within society, sociology is also closely associated to the study and practice of educational administration. The study of organizations and of the bureaucracy, the relations among people, human groups and organizations has obvious implications for the administration of the educational system.

Conclusion: Administration and the Administrator

The multidimensional paradigm of educational administration is an

attempt to arrive at a theoretical synthesis of the American experience in the field of educational administration. The historical evolution of knowledge in the field of educational administration reflected in the form of four, sometimes opposing, sometime complementary and certainly overlapping criteria, takes on the multidimensional form of a model. However, it should be noted that this separation of knowledge into dimensions has analytical purposes, subordinated wholly to the criterion of totality. The relative emphasis given to the different dimensions is based upon the philosophical orientation adopted, the nature of the phenomena and the spatial and historical situation in which they occur.

The conception of this specific paradigm of educational administration is founded upon the philosophical definition which attributes to the cultural dimension of education. It is allied to its political dimension, and it has the substantive value capable of adequately regulating the pedagogical dimension and the economic dimension of the educational system. Based upon the premise that this paradigm is only an initial statement, it is recognized that there is a need for consideration of the paradigm within the context of the Americas, collectively, and by individual nations. However, it is important to note that the elaboration of theories and paradigms of educational administration is a task performed by human beings. The models of educational administration cannot go beyond the practitioners who are responsible for conceiving and utilizing them. This statement suggests a priority effort to choose and prepare educators called upon to study and administer American education. According to the terms of the multidimensional paradigm proposed, the choosing and preparation of

educational administrators should consider four types of competence: economic, pedagogical, political and cultural. The economic competence of the educational administrator refers to efficiency in optimizing the inflow and utilization of resources and technical and rational elements for the attainment of the objectives of the educational system. The pedagogical competence of the educational administrator reflects capacity to formulate educational objectives and prepare effective pedagogical scenarios and means to attain such objectives. The political competence defines the talent of the educational administrator in perceiving the external environment and its influence upon the educational system and its participants, and the ability to adopt strategies of concrete action for the responsive satisfaction of the social and political necessities and demands of the community and its educational system. Finally, the cultural competence of the educational administrator is demonstrated in the capacity to conceive of solutions and the leadership in the implementation of these solutions under the prism of relevance. Furthering the qualitative form of human life in society makes it possible for the participants in the educational system and in the community as a whole to reach total fulfillment.

The preparation of researchers and administrative practitioners on the basis of this frame of competencies, is both a necessity and a challenge to the educational system of the Western Hemisphere. It is a challenge, since it is an immense academic task based upon a complex theme. And it is a necessity, because a central task of defining and channeling the educational systems of the nations of the Americas is a responsibility we hope is felt by all of us in the field of educational administration.

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